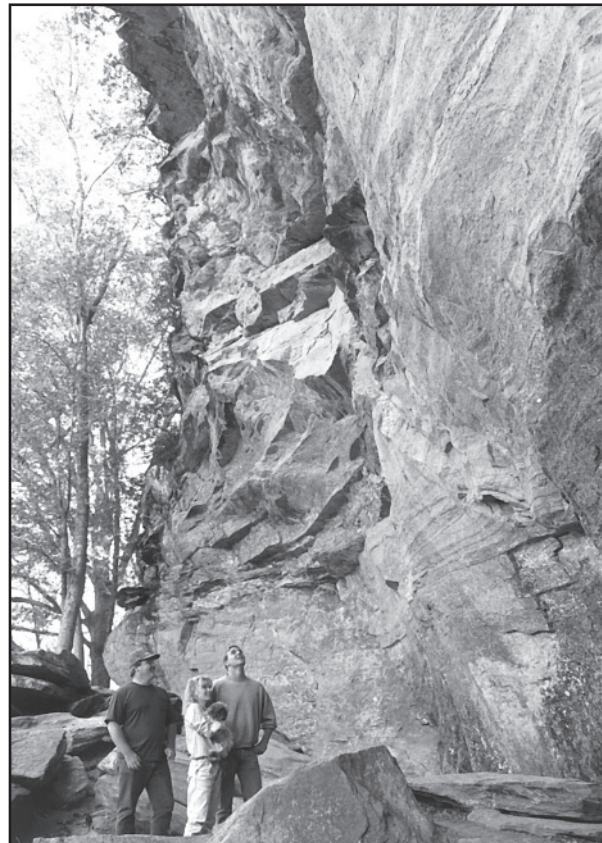


The Rock

Raven Rock State Park sits along the fall zone, an area where the hard, resistant rocks of the foothills give way to the softer rocks and sediments of the coastal plain. The underlying rocks of the area were formed more than 400 million years ago by intense heat and pressure.

Through the ages, flowing waters and swirling winds gradually eroded the land, carving and sculpting Raven Rock. This immense crystalline structure rises to 150 feet and stretches for more than a mile along the Cape Fear River.

The rock was originally called Patterson's Rock for an early settler who found refuge there when his canoe capsized nearby. In 1854, its name was changed to Raven Rock, inspired by the sight of ravens that formerly roosted on the rock ledges.



Nature's Classroom

Rangers hold regularly scheduled educational and interpretive programs about Raven Rock State Park. Contact the park office to arrange a special exploration of Raven Rock State Park for your group or class.

Educational materials about Raven Rock State Park have been developed for grades 5-8 and are correlated to North Carolina's competency-based curriculum in science, social studies, mathematics and English/language arts.

The Raven Rock program introduces students to the geologic processes along the fall zone. Accompanying the program is a teacher's booklet and workshop, free of charge to educators.

History Highlights

The Siouan and Tuscarora Indians hunted the area until European settlers arrived in the mid-1700s. The first settlers were primarily hunters and trappers who were searching for high country similar to their native country, Scotland. Later, stores, mills and quarries were built. Many of the woodlands were farmed. As the forests returned, much of the land was harvested for timber.

A road that stretched from Raleigh to Fayetteville crossed the Cape Fear River via the Northington Ferry and served as the area's major transportation route. Locks and dams were built along the river to facilitate navigation by boat, and Raven Rock became an important landmark for river pilots. After a hurricane destroyed the locks and dams in 1859, the structures were not replaced. Railroad transportation eliminated the need for river travel. As new roads were built, the ferry was closed and Raven Rock became a popular recreation spot. The remnants of the Northington Lock and Dam can still be seen in the park.

In 1965, interest grew in preserving the area as a state park and local citizens organized support for the project. In 1969, a bill establishing the park was passed in the General Assembly. More than 220 acres of land were purchased and another 170 acres were donated by Burlington Industries. Additional tracts have since been purchased, bringing the park to its present size of 4,684 acres.



Fishing

The best places for fishing in the Cape Fear River are the Fish Traps and the mouth of Campbell Creek. Game fish in these waters include largemouth bass, warmouth, bluegill, catfish, redear and green sunfish. Other interesting species are longnose gar, American eel, chub, shiners, darters and pirate perch. Fishing is permitted during posted park hours only. Anglers must have a state fishing license. Regulations of the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission are enforced.



Flora & Fauna

One of the best reasons to visit Raven Rock is the exceptional beauty of its wildflowers. A variety of species reveal magnificent blossoms in early spring. Look over patches of Dutchman's breeches, bloodroot, saxifrage and trailing arbutus. Gaze down paths lined with Solomon's seal, bellwort and spring beauty, or let your eyes wander through a haze of greens and yellows as leaves break their winter dormancy and begin to color the forest.

Raven Rock State Park has a diverse topography. Along the river are high bluffs and low floodplains. Some of the largest trees in the park are found in the floodplain where common species include river birch, beech and sycamore. The river bluffs and cool, moist ravines are home to mountain laurel and rhododendron, as well as elm and red maple. The flat, dry uplands are characterized by pine and oak/hickory forests where sourwood, dogwood and blueberry comprise the understory.

The many streams of Raven Rock create an ideal habitat for aquatic invertebrates and fish. Salamanders are particularly at home along the river bluffs. The Piedmont forest is home to many reptiles. Spotted turtles live in small streams and larger turtles, such as the yellowbelly slider and the snapping turtle are found in the river. Lizards such as the Carolina anole, fence lizard and skink also inhabit the forest.

Among the many harmless snakes found in the park are the northern water snake, rat snake and the eastern hognose snake. Though rarely encountered, the venomous copperhead also resides in the park. Exercise caution when on park trails.

The spring migratory season brings many species of birds to the park. At the peak of the season, it is possible to see as many as 20 species of warblers in a single day. Wood ducks nest in hollow trees along the river and many other species such as hawks, owls and woodpeckers are also found.

Mammals in the park include white-tailed deer and eastern cottontails. Weasels, raccoons, mice and shrews inhabit the woodlands while beavers and muskrats are at home along rivers and creeks. Several species of bats may be seen as they hunt for insects.

Camping

Backpack camping facilities, available to families and groups, offer an opportunity to enjoy the wilderness without distraction. All supplies, including water, must be packed to the sites. Before camping, register your vehicle and obtain a camping permit at the park office.

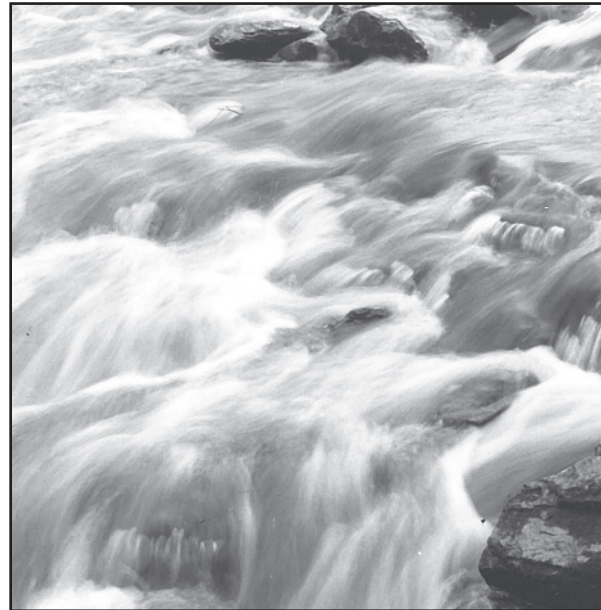
Family camping: Follow Campbell Creek Loop Trail to reach the family wilderness campground, approximately 2.5 miles from the parking area. Five sites, each accommodating up to four people, offer tent pads, fire rings and a vault toilet. Sites are available on a first-come basis.

Group camping: Little Creek Loop Trail leads to the group wilderness camp, 2.2 miles from the parking area. Located along the Cape Fear River, the area offers fire rings and vault toilets and accommodates up to 100 people. Use of this area is by reservation only.

Canoe camping: Six campsites along the Cape Fear River Canoe Trail offer accommodations for canoeists and backpackers. Located beside the river, in a low-lying area, these sites include fire rings and a vault toilet. The canoe camping area is 1.7 miles from the park office and is not accessible by car. Canoeists should reserve sites by calling the park office before embarking on a trip. To check river levels on the internet, click the links on the park's Web site. Available sites are offered to backpackers on a first-come basis.

Canoeing

Negotiate the rapids of Lanier Falls and the Fish Traps on a portion of the Cape Fear Canoe Trail that runs through the park. The entire trail travels for 56 miles along the Cape Fear River from an access point at the U.S. 1 bridge over Deep River. A buoy signals the location of the canoe camp in the park. Contact park staff for information about the nearest access points. There is no access area in the park. Canoeists should exercise caution and wear life vests at all times. Spring floods make the river dangerous for canoeing. Check with the park office for the current water level before launching your canoe. Portage dams and dangerous rapids are present.



Trails

Scenic trails invite you to journey into the park's interior. Raven Rock offers a variety of trails. Travel them on foot or on horseback.

Hiking: A number of trails in the park traverse a variety of terrains. Raven Rock Loop Trail travels through a hardwood forest on its one-mile trip to the park's centerpiece, Raven Rock. Wooden stairs down the face of the river bluff lead to the base of Raven Rock where the river bank provides a place to examine the area beneath the overhang. A stone balcony along the way overlooks the river and the flood plains beyond. Other trails offer access to fishing holes and idyllic scenery. See the park map for information on distance and difficulty.



Horseback riding: Undeveloped woodlands on the north side of the river with areas set aside for parking and picnicking offer more than seven miles of trails for horseback riding. Land adjoining park bridle trails is posted private property. Respect the rights of landowners. Do not trespass. Horses are not permitted on hiking trails. Avoid riding the trails when they are wet to prevent trail degradation and to ensure rider and horse safety. Call the park office or check the park Web site for the current bridle trail conditions.

Picnicking

A wide trail leads to the picnic ground from the parking lots on the south side of the river. Towering oak and hickory trees provide shade for 27 tables and eight grills. Drinking water, restrooms and a refreshment stand with a drink machine are located nearby. A smaller picnic area is located on the north side of the park. Some picnic facilities are accessible for persons with disabilities. Call the park office for more information.

Rules & Regulations

Make your visit a safe and rewarding experience. Some of our rules are posted in the park for the protection of our natural resources and our visitors. A complete list of regulations is available at the park office. Help preserve our natural resources by observing the following:

- ❑ The removal of any plant, animal, rock or artifact is prohibited.
- ❑ All state parks are wildlife preserves. Hunting or trapping is not permitted.
- ❑ Do not litter. Please throw trash in proper receptacles. State law requires aluminum cans to be placed in recycling containers.
- ❑ Firearms and fireworks are prohibited.
- ❑ The possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited.
- ❑ North Carolina motor vehicle and traffic laws apply in the park.
- ❑ Pets must be on a leash no longer than six feet.
- ❑ Climbing or rappelling on rock outcrops is prohibited.
- ❑ Fishing is permitted only during park hours. Regulations of the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission are enforced.
- ❑ Fires are permitted only in designated areas.
- ❑ Swimming is not permitted in the park.
- ❑ Camping is allowed in designated areas by permit only.
- ❑ Respect the rights of private property owners. Remain within the park boundary when using trails.

For Your Safety

To prevent accidents, remember these safety tips.

- ❑ At times the Cape Fear River may be dangerous for canoeing. Before embarking on a canoe trip, check with park staff for the current river level. Canoeing the river is not recommended if the water level is above 3.5 feet at the Lillington Gauging Station.
- ❑ Stay on designated hiking trails to avoid steep drop-offs and slick areas along the river.
- ❑ Wear a life vest when canoeing.
- ❑ Venomous snakes, ticks and poison ivy may be encountered along park trails. Be alert.

Contact park staff for other safety tips or for an explanation of park rules.